



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Public Protection Cabinet

**Steven L. Beshear, Governor**

**Robert D. Vance, Secretary**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Ricki Gardenhire  
502-564-5525**

### **‘Building Safety Month’ continues with backyard, pool safety awareness week**

***Goal is to prevent accidents, save lives***

**Frankfort, Ky.** (May 21, 2013) – As Kentuckians take to the great outdoors for sunshine and fun during the summer months, precautions should be taken to ensure outdoor areas are safe from potential hazards.

May has been proclaimed “Building Safety Month” by state and federal officials to help families and businesses understand the importance of sustaining safe structures and reinforcing the need for modern building codes, strong code enforcement and a well-trained industry workforce.

Gov. Steve Beshear has asked the Public Protection Cabinet’s Department of Housing, Buildings and Construction (DHBC) to oversee the public awareness campaign that was founded by the International Code Council (ICC).

This year’s theme is “Code Officials Keep You Safe,” and the week of May 20-27 focuses on backyard and pool safety. Swimming pools, barbecue grills, gardening tools and fertilizers, and lawn toys can all pose safety risks.

Gary Feck, director of DHBC’s Division of Building Codes Enforcement, says the No. 1 rule for outdoor and water activities is to have adult supervision. Feck also reminds us to research local buildings codes and regulations when considering a swimming pool purchase. “Determine exactly what local permits are needed and what requirements you must follow,” he said. “In-ground pools

holding more than 24 inches of water, must be surrounded by a fence or other barrier at least four feet high to limit access to the pool.

“There are a number of precautions that families can take to have a safer summer season,” said Feck. “It’s a lot to remember so be sure to review the tips often and make adjustments. Be sure that your children understand what the safety rules are, too.”

Feck said that in areas without a local building inspection program, the state has authority to review and inspect public and private in-ground pools associated with commercial buildings. In areas with a local building inspection program, DHBC has responsibility for inspecting pools with an occupancy load greater than 100 persons.

The following are safety tips from DHBC and the International Code Council:

### **Pool, Spa and Deck Safety**

- There is no substitute for adult supervision to ensure child safety in the water.
- Don’t assume guests or their children can swim. Ask and observe.
- Toddlers and infants should have physical contact with an adult at all times while in the pool area.
- Make sure all doors and gates leading to the pool or spa area are securely closed when the pool is not in use.
- Steps and ladders for above-ground pools should be secured or removed when the pool is not in use.
- Remove all chairs, tables, large toys or other objects that would allow a child to climb up to reach the gate latch or enable the child to climb over the pool isolation fence.
- Do not allow anyone impaired by alcohol or drugs to use the pool.
- Make sure all pedestrian gates in the barrier fence for your pool are self-closing and self-latching. Other gates should be padlocked.
- Reaching and throwing aids like poles should be kept on both sides of the pool.
- Keep a phone within easy reach of the pool or spa area for emergency calls.
- All pool and hot tub drains must have a cover or grate that meets industry standards for suction fittings marked to indicate compliance. Check to see that these covers are not broken or in disrepair, and that they are anchored firmly over the drain openings.
- Install a pool alarm to detect accidental or unauthorized entrance into the water. While the alarm provides an immediate warning, it does not substitute for the barrier fences, door alarms and safety covers required by the code.
- There should be no electrical devices in the pool, spa and hot tub area unless they are installed, maintained and inspected by qualified professionals. Electrical devices also need to be protected by a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI).

- Spa water temperatures should be set to 104 degrees Fahrenheit or lower to avoid elevated body temperature, which could lead to drowsiness, unconsciousness, heat stroke, or death.
- Install either an automatic or manually operated, approved safety cover to completely block access to water in the pool, spa or hot tub. Never allow anyone to stand or play on a pool cover.
- Check for warning signs of an unsafe deck, including loose or wobbly railings or support beams, missing or loose screws that connect a deck to the house, corrosion, rot and cracks.

### **Grill Safety**

- Place the barbeque grill away from siding, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches. It is also unsafe to use grills in a garage, porch or enclosed area that could trap carbon monoxide. Never grill on top of anything that can catch on fire.
- When grilling, have a fire extinguisher, a garden hose or at least 4 gallons of water close by in case of a fire.
- Keep children away from fires and grills. Establish a safety zone around the grill and instruct the children to remain outside of the zone. A chalk line works great for this purpose. Never leave the grill unattended.
- Check propane cylinder hoses for leaks before use.
- Do not move hot grills.
- Never add charcoal starter fluid when coals or kindling have already been ignited, and never use any flammable or combustible liquid other than charcoal starter fluid to get the fire going.

### **Other safety measures include:**

- Don't leave toys, tools and equipment in the yard.
- Keep steps, sidewalks and patios in good repair.
- Check all swings, slides, playhouses and other structures for sharp objects, rusty metal pieces, breaks or weakened support pieces.
- Put fertilizers and other lawn and garden chemicals out of the reach of children.
- Learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

Each week of Building Safety Month spotlights a specific area of building safety. The last week will focus on energy use and green building.

For additional information on Building Safety Month, visit the ICC's website at <http://www.iccsafe.org/BSM/Pages/default.aspx>.

###